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FlashBack

Volume 60, Number 4, Winter 2010

Washington County Historical Society
118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701
http://www.washcohistoricalsociety.org
http://www.headquartershouse.org

Flashback (ISSN: 0428-5573) is published quarterly in the spring, summer, fall, and winter as an official publication of the Washington County Historical Society. Send all materials for publication to: *Flashback* Editor, Washington County Historical Society, 188 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

There is no payment for articles published in *Flashback*. The editor retains the right to edit all sumbitted articles prior to publication.

Society membership is invited to those interested in preservation of Washington County history. Annual dues for categories of membership are: Senior, Student, Public Library, $15; General, $25; Trail Blazer, $50; Explorer, $100; Wagon Master, $250; Pioneer, $500; Statesman, $1,000; Empire Builder, $5,000.

Members are mailed *Flashback* each quarter. Available past issues are $6 each, postpaid. Add $1 postage for issues printed in 1951 through February 1972. Web site: washcohistorica1society.org or headquartershouse.org.

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FLASHBACK

**Journal of
the Washington County Historical Society**

Volume 60 **Winter 2010** **Number 4**

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Cover: Charles Morrow Wilson, ca. 1935.

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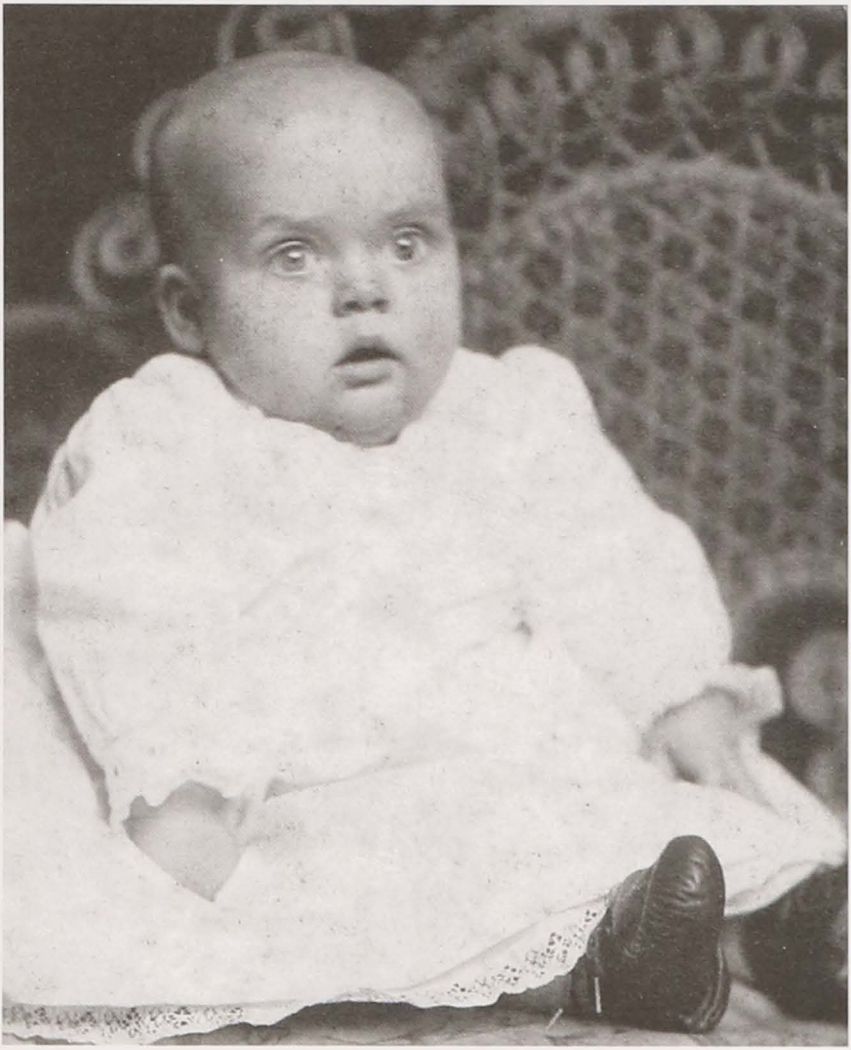

Charles Morrow Wilson, 1905

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You Can't Go Home Again: Charles Morrow Wilson's Unhappy Return to Fayetteville

By J.B. Hogan*

In a May 1951 article entitled "Hometown Revisited," author Charles Morrow Wilson – in advance of moving back to Fayetteville after more than two decades away – declared that although he had been a "world traveler for many years" he had also remained a person who believed "in going home to live."[1]

Buoyed by the successful production of his play *Acres of Sky* (partly based upon Wilson's 1930 novel of the same name) at the November 1950 opening of the Fine Arts Center on the Fayetteville campus of the University of Arkansas, Wilson believed that he and his family would find "a good life" back in the Ozarks. It would be the ideal place, he thought, where he and his wife Martha could "work and serve the community" and raise their three sons.[2]

Despite experiencing what he called "a great deal of extremely shabby snobbishness"[3] while growing up in Fayetteville and attending the university, Wilson felt that the city and college had changed and that in "the main, greatness is emerging at the University of Arkansas as well as in the town of Fayetteville."[4]

Just three short years later, denouncing friends and foes alike and angrily referring to Fayetteville as "Nastyville,"[5] Wilson removed himself and his family and returned to Putney, Vermont where they had lived for a number of years before the ill-fated attempt to return home. Wilson called the New England farm home for the rest of his life.

What caused Charles Morrow Wilson, one of the most successful authors Fayetteville has ever produced, to re-embrace his hometown so

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*The author was awarded first place in the Society's 2010 W.J. Lemke Prize for this article. He is an accomplished writer and is a frequent contributor to *Flashback*.

enthusiastically and then in such a short time grow to despise and vilify it so vehemently? A look back at Wilson's life and the events leading up to and occurring after his return to Fayetteville provide some of the answers.

Wilson, whose name is now all but forgotten, was once a highly regarded, well-known writer of national and international status. He penned over forty-five books, mostly non-fiction, and wrote dozens of magazine articles and short stories during the course of a professional writing career that spanned some fifty years. Beginning as a brilliant, precocious high school and university student writer, he later honed his craft as a journalist traveling extensively in Latin America and Africa to attain a considerable reputation.

Born into a prominent Fayetteville family on June 16, 1905, Wilson was the youngest child of Joseph Dickson and Mattie Morrow Wilson. Joseph Dickson Wilson, the son of A. M. Wilson, one of Fayetteville's founding fathers, was a businessman active in local civic affairs. Charles Morrow referred to his father as a "plain-style backwoods farmer who was a renowned Bible Scholar,"[6] although he simply referred to him as a "suburban farmer"[7] elsewhere in his writings.

Wilson's mother, Charles Morrow wrote, was one of the first three women graduates to receive a degree—back in 1890."[8] Later, however, in the introduction to his story "More Light," – from his collection of Ozark folk tales *Stars Is God's Lanterns* – he modified this statement to say that his mother "became the first (my emphasis) woman to receive a bachelor's degree from the then mewling University of Arkansas."[9]

Regardless of where she stood as an early graduate of the University of Arkansas, Wilson's abiding affection for his mother is clearly and notably displayed in his desire, years later, to have Fayetteville's city park named after her (it is officially Wilson Park).

Wilson had two older siblings. Carl, a half-brother, was a graduate of the University of Arkansas and worked as a schoolteacher and administrator, mostly in Oklahoma, before his untimely death in 1948 at age 52.[10] Kate Wilson Ripley was Charles Morrow's full sister. She also attended the University of Arkansas and majored in music. She married a local boy, Vincent Ripley, and lived all but the last few years of her life in Fayetteville.[11]

By Wilson's own account, his grandfather, Alfred M. Wilson was a public official for over 50 years and was an attorney for the Cherokee Nation as well as a member of the Governor's Commission that helped Oklahoma gain statehood.[12] Alfred M. was elected to the Arkansas State

Joseph and Mattie Wilson and Children, ca. 1920.
Charles Morrow Wilson is on the far left with his sister Kate to his left and his half-brother Carl standing behind their parents.

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
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Legislature in 1848 and in 1852 was appointed "United States District Attorney for the western district of Arkansas," by President Franklin Pierce, a position to which he was reappointed in 1856.[13] He also served as mayor of Fayetteville in 1876-1877.[14]

Charles Morrow Wilson's large extended family also included his uncle Robert J. Wilson, A. M. Wilson's eldest son. R. J. Wilson served as city attorney and mayor of Fayetteville and was a state senator for 22 years.[15] Senator R. J.'s son, Charles Morrow's cousin, Allen M. Wilson, was also a mayor of Fayetteville, serving non-consecutive terms in 1917-1919 and in 1921-1929.[16] After his terms as mayor, Allen M. served as Fayetteville Postmaster from 1934 until his early death in 1942.[17]

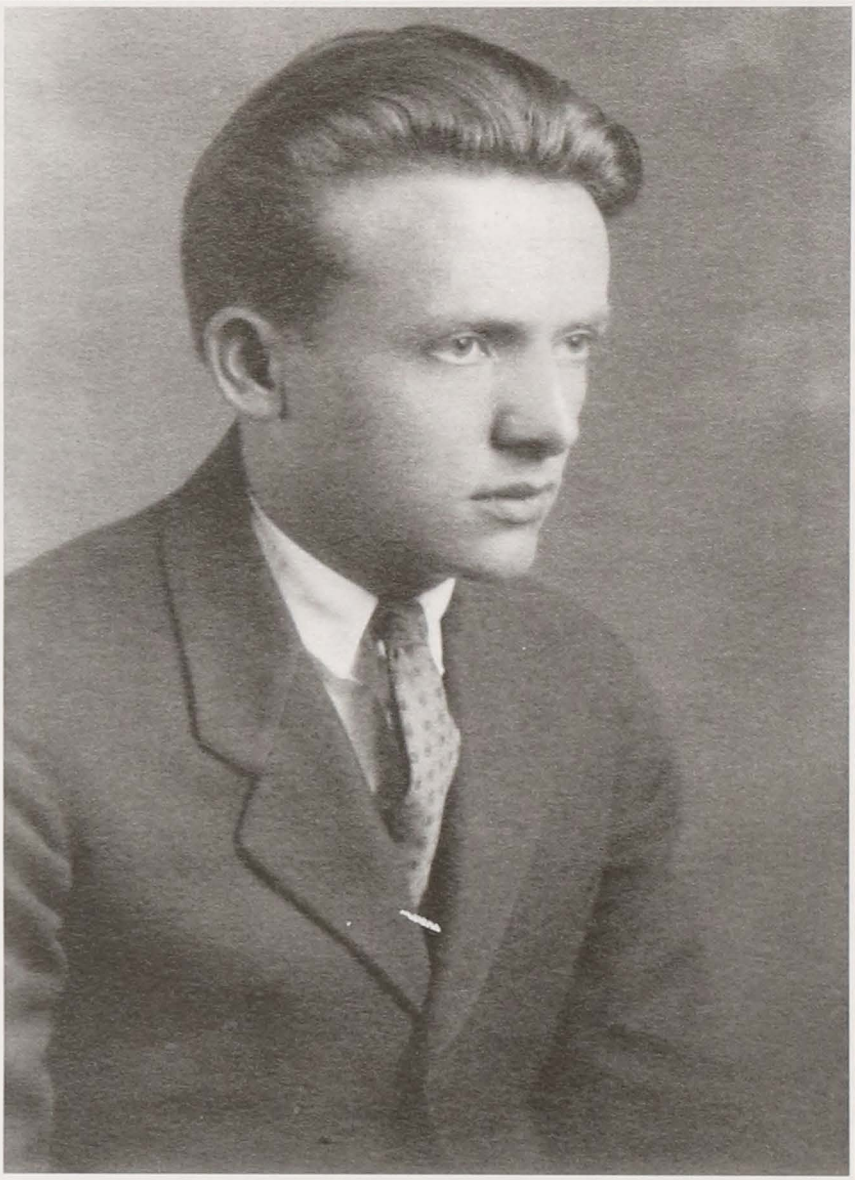
Nell Wilson Jones, Charles Morrow's aunt, played a key role in her nephew's life as well, particularly in regard to the sale of Wilson's Pasture to the city of Fayetteville which greatly expanded city park. Aunt Nell was often involved when Charles Morrow and other family members began to sell off Wilson land in the north part of the city during the mid to late 1940s. Some of the sales were at least partially in response to the increased demand for local housing created by the influx of returning veterans just after the end of World War II.

A highly intelligent young man from a fine, old local family, Charles Morrow showed early signs of finding his own way in the world beyond that already bestowed upon him by virtue of the Wilson name. A 1922 graduate of Fayetteville High School, Wilson attended the University of Arkansas where he soon began to make a name for himself as a writer. By his sophomore year, Wilson was described in the annual *Razorback* yearbook as a "young journalist of note" and was listed among the contributors (as "Chas. Wilson") to the university humor magazine *The White Mule*."[18] The following year, as a junior, Wilson became the Military Editor of the 1925 *Razorback* and Rewrite Editor for the student newspaper *The Arkansas Traveler*.[19]

During that junior year, 1925, Wilson also became a regular visitor at the home of celebrated author Charles J. Finger. Finger, a world-traveler and adventurer, had settled on land west of Fayetteville late in 1920. From the gentleman farmer's compound he called Gayeta, Finger held literary court and put out a nationally-known, well-respected journal entitled *All's Well*. Recognizing Charles Morrow Wilson's budding writing skills, the "picturesque" Finger[20] took the young college student under his wing.

After graduating from Arkansas in 1926, Wilson soon began working steadily on *All's Well* and by late 1926 he was contributing book reviews to the journal.[21] In March 1927, Wilson was listed as Associate Editor and that summer he penned an essay "On Cats," perhaps his first professional publication.[22]

In June 1927 Wilson had added Business Manager to his titles and *All's Well* was actually listed as being owned by both Charles J. Finger and Charles Morrow Wilson. Also in June 1927, Wilson published an article entitled "In the Arkansas Backhills."[23] This early interest in local hillbilly color would stand him in good stead as he tilled this fertile soil repeatedly in his subsequent work.



Charles Morrow Wilson, ca. 1925

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F1, Photo 9,
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Later in 1927, Wilson became involved with the first major project of his editorial and literary career. With Finger's help and blessing, Wilson compiled and edited a collection of the elder writer's regional stories. This book was *Ozark Fantasia* and it was published locally under the Golden Horsemen Press imprint. Thanks to Charles J. Finger, Charles Morrow Wilson's fledgling literary career was ready to soar.

In March 1928, *All's Well* printed Wilson's story "The Reeds Go Forth."[24] This was almost certainly Wilson's first published fiction and seemed to confirm Charles J. Finger's earlier assessment of Wilson's ability. "I'm willing to wager the best five books out of my library...," Finger had written in the afterglow of the release of *Ozark Fantasia*, "that Wilson is a writer in the making."[25]

Finger's encomium was echoed in the spring of 1928 when Wilson was honored by membership in the New York City Writer's Club[26] and then later that fall when an article in the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* declared Wilson a "genius."[27] Yet by May of 1928, Wilson was no longer listed in the *All's Well* masthead, although he was listed as Business Manager at the back of the journal. In the August-September issue Wilson was not listed at all and Finger told his readership that "Charles Wilson has severed his connection with the paper."[28]

The reasons for Wilson's leaving *All's Well* are not clear but during this time, according to his own autobiographical material, he was also working as a "stringer" (on-assignment reporter) for newspapers in both New York City and St. Louis.[29] One of his more prominent newspaper assignments came back in 1927 when the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sent him to cover the second Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney heavyweight championship bout held in Chicago on September 22.[30]

Relocating temporarily to New York City, Wilson had also begun to write articles for national magazines by this time and on October 19, 1928 sold the article "Elizabethan America" to the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly* for the tidy sum, in those days, of one hundred dollars.[31]

In 1929, right about the time his life-long Fayetteville friend J. W. "Bill" Fulbright was returning from an extended period of study abroad, Wilson made his own trip overseas. He left in late April for England where he hoped to study history at Oxford University and observe local rural life in order to write about it for American magazines like *Outlook*. In these heady days, Wilson was virtually exploding upon the journal and magazine scene in the United States, publishing almost everything he

wrote in such disparate publications as the *North American Review*, *New Republic*, and *American Druggist*.[32]

Unfortunately for Wilson, shortly after he arrived in England he developed appendicitis and had to undergo an emergency appendectomy in a British hospital. Recovering and studying in Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, however, he optimistically wrote home to his mother that "from now on I will enjoy health of a sort which I had never so much as conceived of before."[33]

His restored health also buoyed his youthful hopes and enthusiasm for his chosen profession. "I am going to continue to win at writing," he

Charles J. Finger, ca. 1930

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F7, Photo 14,
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proclaimed in the same letter, and "I am going to find life interesting and beautiful wherever I may come upon it."[34] Returning to the United States in late August 1929, Wilson returned briefly to Fayetteville then moved back to New York to permanently pursue his literary career.

Despite the Stock Market crash in September 1929 and the subsequent and severe economic downturn of the Great Depression, the decade of the 1930s saw Charles Morrow Wilson rise rapidly as a writer. From 1930 to 1940, he published nine books and innumerable articles and short stories.

His first novel, *Acres of Sky* (an Arkansas backwoods story later to be made into a play at the University of Arkansas) was published by Putnam in 1930. *Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark* (a biography of the celebrated explorer) and *Backwoods America* (again mining the cultural ore of rustic America) both appeared in 1934. *Money at the Crossroads*, an early foray into politics and economics, and *Country Living: Plus and Minus* (more homespun material) were published in 1937 and 1938, respectively.

His shorter works continued to pile up as well, as he was steadily published in most of the well known journals of the age such as the *American Spectator*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Saturday Evening Post*, among many others. These article and story sales provided Wilson with a decent flow of income in an era of generally rough financial times. He was paid as much as $400 for an article in the big eastern journals[35] – very good money when average workers were lucky to make one dollar a day doing physical labor.

During the 1930s, Wilson maintained correspondence with a number of well known people. In addition to his ongoing correspondence with J. W. Fulbright, who would be rapidly moving up the national political ladder, he interviewed famous automobile entrepreneur Henry Ford,[36] and Wilson's editor at John Day Co. publishers in 1934 was none other than Pearl Buck, then at the peak of her fame and success.[37]

Another famous acquaintance of Wilson's was Theodore Dreiser, the celebrated author of *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy*, masterpieces of early twentieth century American literary naturalism. Dreiser sought out young Wilson as a possible contributor to the novelist's journal *American Spectator*.[38] The two men dined together occasionally in New York, often enough for Wilson to offer an evaluation of the noted novelist. Dreiser was "a likeable old cuss," Wilson wrote to his mother about the great writer, and "in many ways an extremely fine man."[39]

In the mid-1930s, Wilson began working as a publicist for the United Fruit Company and traveled widely as part of his work for the giant banana corporation. He made trips to Cuba, Jamaica, Mexico, and to most of the countries of Central America including Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica.

By the late 1930s, Wilson had settled down to a life as noted author and gentleman farmer in Putney, Vermont. In November 1938, he and his wife Iris Woolcock divorced (they had married in 1935). Remaining on good terms with his ex-wife, Wilson actually purchased his own farm site on land adjacent to where he and Woolcock had lived in the last years of their marriage.

The following year, 1939, Wilson married Martha Starr, daughter of well-known local writer Fred Starr.[40] The Wilson-Starr union produced three boys: Charles Morrow, Jr. (b. 1940), James S. (b. 1941), and J. Mathew (b. 1945).

When the 1940s rolled around, then, Wilson was firmly established as a writer of note, especially so in New York City, the hub of book and magazine publishing. He knew and had interviewed famous people, was well known by key magazine and book editors, and had continued to pour out articles and books – he averaged about one book a year throughout his long career.

In the summer of 1941, United Fruit asked Wilson to help create the Middle America Information Bureau, a publicity arm, or "bona fide information service" as Wilson deemed it, of the multi-national fruit company.[41] As part of his work, Wilson helped write the Middle America Charter, a document meant to reassure Central American and Caribbean nations of United Fruit's good intentions.

The "paramount goal" of "Pan-American relations" and of United Fruit, the document made clear, was "Inter-American brotherhood" and the "unity of ideals and attainments."[42] Despite United Fruit's creation of hospitals and schools in the banana producing countries, they had had a history of difficult labor relations, including numerous work stoppages.

One of the Middle America Charter's main points was to assure farm workers that United Fruit was not and would "never be in the market for 'coolie' labor."[43] The document also tried to calm jittery and unstable countries in the region by asserting that the company recognized and respected the "just sovereignty of all Middle American governments."[44]

Iris Woolcock, ca. 1930

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
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University of Arkansas Libraries

Wilson's work with United Fruit provided the base material for a spate of articles and books and during the first half of the 1940s he would write several books on tropics-related subjects.

Ambassadors in White, a study of several physicians who devoted themselves to tropical medicine, including William Gorgas, Carlos Finley and Walter Reed, came out in 1942 and was one of Wilson's best-selling and highly regarded works. *Challenge and Opportunity: Central America* was published the following year and *Middle America*, a product of Wilson and United Fruit's Middle America Information Bureau, was released in 1944.

Even though Wilson's ever growing success and reputation as an author was a product of his life and contacts in the east and although he continued to maintain his home there in Putney, Vermont, he still visited

Fayetteville when he could. As far back as the summer of 1937 Wilson had told his father that he "looked forward to getting home" and was "now working out my life and work so that henceforth I can spend a great deal more time at home."[45]

In early October 1944, with the outcome of World War II swinging steadily towards an Allied victory, Wilson – now out of a brief stint in the military (by his own account "brief and undistinguished")[46] and working again in New York City – wrote Mrs. Roberta Fulbright, owner-publisher of the *Northwest Arkansas Times* and mother of soon-to-be U. S. Senator J. W. Fulbright, concerning their shared interest in improving the quality of life in Fayetteville.

Agreeing "wholeheartedly" with Mrs. Fulbright, Wilson said that he felt that an "effort to establish a museum, a park, a really good library and perhaps other so-called cultural institutions is particularly in order at this time.[47] Wilson's pursuit of one of these goals – giving Fayetteville the type of park he envisioned it would want – would be a long and arduous one, full of pitfalls and conflicts, but the first step nonetheless in the writer's eventual, if short-lived return to his hometown.

Less than three weeks later, on October 31, 1944, Wilson again wrote the first lady of Fayetteville journalism to tell her that he had taken out an option from his aunt Nell Wilson Jones for the nearly seventeen acres of land adjoining city park known then as Wilson Pasture.[48]

Wilson suggested that while the Fayetteville city council debated whether to buy city park from the City Park Company (headed by Dr. Noah Drake of Drake Field fame),[49] his purchase of Wilson Pasture might be "a way to start this park program."[50] The implication was that Wilson would sell the adjoining family property to the city, thereby greatly expanding the current municipal park.

In early January 1945, Wilson wrote his sister Kate that he had "taken steps" to purchase Wilson pasture from his Aunt Nell for $8500.[51] That same day he wrote his Fayetteville attorney, Suzanne "Peggy" Chalfant Lighton to write a $2500 check for the down payment on the land and listed the per acre cost of the land at $500.[52]

Mrs. Fulbright, getting wind of the potential sale, mildly prompted Wilson in a letter dated February 26, 1945. "My dear Charlie," she wrote pleasantly, "I keep wondering if you aren't itching to present us a 'Wilson Park." Towards the end of the letter, her tone became more sober: "Seriously," she added, "if you want to give or sell? that park area, let us know."[53]

In late March, Wilson and Fayetteville Mayor George T. Sanders exchanged letters concerning the possible sale of Wilson pasture to the city. Wilson told the mayor that, despite his "deep personal affection" for the seventeen acres and the city's "disappointing" record in park maintenance, he would still be "glad to help the city...without any view of profit to myself."[54]

By summer time, Wilson and the city were ready to deal. On July 3, 1945 the *Times* reported a Wilson proposal to the city council in which he would sell the sixteen and seven-eighths acres of Wilson Pasture to Fayetteville, thereby nearly tripling the size of city park. Wilson wanted the new, vastly larger park to be known as Mattie Morrow Wilson Memorial Park, in honor of his mother.

The selling price for the land would be $22,500 (better than $1300 an acre) but Wilson planned to donate $7000 to the city as a gift. The selling price to the city would then be $15, 500 (a little over $900 per

Charles Morrow Wilson, Martha Starr Wilson, and Charles Morrow Wilson, Jr., ca. 1940.

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F6, Photo 8,
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University of Arkansas Libraries

acre). On August 15, 1945 the city council approved the purchase and the next day the sale contract was signed.[55]

Wilson envisioned the new park as a "beautiful and valuable"[56] place for local residents to enjoy an undeveloped natural site in the heart of Fayetteville. Yet, only four days after the contract was signed with the city, Mayor Sanders opened up the entire park, newly acquired Wilson Pasture and all, as a trailer camp for returning World War II veterans.[57]

Even after signing the contract, Wilson had reservations about the sale of his family's pasture to the city. In a letter to his sister Kate in December of 1945, he wrote that his mind was "pretty definitely made up not to deal with the city of Fayetteville in terms of a park." He was not sure that public interest in the city park expansion was more than "lukewarm."[58]

Despite those lingering concerns on Wilson's part, the sale officially went through on August 21, 1946.[59] Fayetteville City Park was officially and finally the size that it still is today. And it is so thanks to Charles Morrow Wilson.

Like many situations in Wilson's life, however, the conclusion of the park sale didn't bring the matter to a close. In March 1948, a local group (including Wilson's own private lawyer "Peggy" Lighton) tried to purchase part of city park to build a Boy's Club. During the following months, opposition to the Boy's Club plan grew and late in the year Wilson himself entered the fray.

In letters to the *Times* printed December 23 and 29, 1948, Wilson called the proposed plan a "sly sharper's trick" and a violation of the "gentleman's agreement" he had made with the city when he sold them Wilson Pasture. The land purchased by the city, Wilson maintained, was to be "used as a wooded park."

The controversy continued into 1949, even bringing Mrs. Fulbright to editorialize that while she supported the idea of a Boy's Club for the youth of Fayetteville, her respect for Charles Morrow Wilson and his family led her to think the park was not "adequate for anything more than a park."[60] For his part, Wilson offered to end the controversy by buying the Wilson Pasture land back.[61]

Arguments continued on both sides of the issue until November 3, 1950 when Fayetteville Mayor Powell M. Rhea (he succeeded George T. Sanders in 1949) wrote Wilson to let him know that the idea of a Boy's Club using part of city park "has been well erased from the public's mind."[62] The new mayor wished to ease Wilson's concern about how the

park was being used as well. As noted earlier, Rhea's predecessor, George T. Sanders, had allowed city park, including the land "donated" by Wilson, to be used as a trailer camp for university student housing. Rhea assured Wilson that this practice would be eliminated and that "everything now is towards getting rid of the trailers ... not later than June, 1951."[63]

At about the same time he was involved in the different controversies surrounding his city park "gift," Wilson also was actively engaged in two projects that would enhance his international reputation and, in one case, create a bit more controversy as well.

The somewhat controversial project was an archaeological mission to Mexico sponsored by United Fruit and the Carnegie Institute. This mission was to the Mayan ruins at Bonampak in the jungles of Chiapas, a Mexican state bordering Guatemala.

Early in 1946, adventurer-photographer Giles Greville Healy was led by a Lacandone Indian (descendants of the Mayans) to the ruins of an ancient temple near their village. What Healy was shown inside the temple were the remains of murals painted some 1200 years earlier. The murals were doubly significant: first, they revealed a level of Mayan artistic skill not yet suspected at the time; and second, they provided a window to the Mayan peoples and their highly evolved but nearly forgotten culture.[64]

Later commentators remarked that the find at Bonampak "shattered illusions that the Maya were a totally peaceful people and shed light on the sophistication of their arts, culture, and economy."[65]

From his office at the Middle America Information Bureau in New York City, Charles Morrow Wilson supervised (he referred to himself as "General Manager and Coordinator")[66] the exploration of Bonampak and the documentary that was to be made from Healey's film of the adventure. Wilson wrote several articles about the expedition and also worked closely in producing the film. Herein lay the source of another controversy.

In early articles like "Backwards a Dozen Centuries"[67] and "Bonampak,"[68] Wilson gave credit to Healey but in later pieces such as "Nature's Own Children"[69] he wrote as if it had been he who had lived among the Lacandone Indians and not Healey. As work on the documentary film about the Maya stretched into 1947, Wilson and Healey developed a rift.

"I am fully aware of the value of this Lacandone work," Wilson wrote noted Hollywood producer Kenneth MacGowan, "but I have frankly been somewhat peeved by Giles' reiteration that ... he was in the jungle bleeding for me." From his standpoint, Wilson added that he had been "in the

Charles Morrow Wilson, ca. 1950.

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F2, Photo 1,
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jungles of New York City doing considerable suffering for him (Healey) ... and by suffering I mean heavy specific financial sacrifices." He did allow that Healey, like he himself in earlier trips to the tropics for United Fruit, had "repeatedly ... risked life and health."[70]

The feud with Healey grew to the point that on September 4, 1947, Wilson wrote MacGowan to complain that Healey was acting like "a very spoiled brat." More seriously, Wilson told the Hollywood executive that Healey had accused him of having "hyphenated my name with the project," a charge Wilson vehemently denied.[71]

"I am getting awfully annoyed at all the friction between you and Giles," MacGowan responded to Wilson's letter of September 4. As for article credits relating to the Bonamak-Lacandone expedition, he asked why Wilson couldn't "recast a few sentences" from third to first person and put "Giles' name on it?" Or better: "leave it alone and use the byline" by "Giles Greville Healey, as told to Charles Morrow Wilson." Whatever the resolution, MacGowan wanted the problem resolved because he was "getting sick to death of the tediousness of trying to keep you and Giles in the same stable."[72]

After MacGowan's dressing down, Wilson was conciliatory and made it clear that he wanted Healey "to get the money" from a proposed article for *National Geographic* just as he had from "Backwards a Dozen Centuries," the article Wilson had written for *Natural History*.[73]

With the feud under control, *Maya Through the Ages* was finally completed and released in 1949. It was the last film Kenneth MacGowan ever made. Choosing the perhaps less contentious world of academia, he left Hollywood in order to "found the first theatre and film school at UCLA."[74]

In addition to the Mayan project and his other work with United Fruit, in the mid-1940s Charles Morrow Wilson was hired by Firestone Plantations Company to travel to the African nations of Liberia (where in 1946 he was appointed Special Consultant to President William S. Tubman)[75] and Equatorial West Africa.

Firestone Plantations, a part of automobile tire magnate Harvey Firestone's economic empire, was involved in the production of rubber for the United States war effort. Wilson's work for Firestone was primarily in, as he described it, the field of "subsistence farming,"[76] concerned with producing crops to feed native workers.

Still, as he always did, Wilson managed to harvest enough material to produce books and articles based on his experiences. In 1943, he

published *Trees and Test Tubes: The Story of Rubber*, a history of Charles Goodyear and the production of rubber around the world. The book featured photographs by Wilson's ex-wife Iris Woolcock.

In 1945, Wilson pursued his new and ongoing interest in food and farming with the publication of *New Crops for the New World. Liberia*, based on his African work, was published in 1947.

In that same year, with twenty books and dozens of articles and stories to his credit, Charles Morrow Wilson's national and international success was recognized by his alma mater. On June 9, 1947, the University of Arkansas presented him with one of its highest honors: the Distinguished Alumni Citation. Wilson was cited in particular for his tropical medicine work in nations like Liberia and for his involvement in the agriculture of Central American nations such as Honduras.[77]

Charles Morrow Wilson, ca. 1960.

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
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At the beginning of the 1950s, then, Charles Morrow Wilson was being tugged back toward Fayetteville, his hometown. He had sold the city his family's land to triple the size of city park, he had become a renowned author with ties around the globe, and he had come home to receive the Distinguished Alumni award from the University of Arkansas, from which he had graduated in 1926. What more could happen to make the homeward tug even stronger? The answer was given in the first year of the new decade.

That year, 1950, the University of Arkansas planned to open a brand new Fine Arts Center designed by architect Edward Durell Stone of New York City, who was himself a native of Fayetteville[78] and had attended the University of Arkansas. The center consisted of three interconnected structures: a classroom and studio building, a music recital hall, and a theatre. University officials were looking for a special program to celebrate the grand opening of the center and they chose Charles Morrow Wilson's musical drama *Acres of Sky* as the opening show.[79]

Material from *Acres of Sky*, Wilson's first published novel, and from *Rabble Rouser*, also fiction and making use of historical material from the life of Arkansas and Fayetteville legend Archibald Yell, was combined to make an Ozarks "song-dance show."[80]

The university agreed to pay up to $8,000 dollars towards the total cost of the production.[81] With finances essentially settled and Virgil L. Baker, head of the Arkansas Department of Speech and Dramatic Art, serving as his liaison, Wilson hired New York City friends Arthur Kreutz and Zoe Schiller to provide words and music for the play. By summer 1950, the production was on.

Throughout the fall, excited preparations continued as Wilson, Kreutz and Schiller (the musical couple would later marry) came to Fayetteville to direct the play. After selecting actors, mostly locals from the University of Arkansas, and completing other pre-production tasks, *Acres of Sky* was scheduled to open Thursday night, November 16, 1950.

Two nights before the opening, Mrs. Fulbright and her former long-time *Northwest Arkansas Times* Editor Lessie Stringfellow Read held a dinner at the Washington Hotel honoring Wilson and the other directors of the play.[82]

On the day of the opening, the paper listed a number of out of town guests arriving in Fayetteville for the play. Among these were Governor and Mrs. Sid McMath, E. S. Whitman of United Fruit, Edmond Burks of

Firestone, and George Freedley, theatre writer for the New York City Public Library.

"Critics Praise Production," the Friday, November 27 *Times* heralded its opinion of the premiere of *Acres of Sky*. The music was deemed to be "a clever combination of folk tunes" arranged using "contemporary harmonic devices." Mrs. Fulbright, in the same issue, was more effusive.

"We are now in the stream to produce," she enthused, "great products, great actors and actresses, drama and song artists and dancers." She concluded that Stone, architect of the Fine Arts Building, and Charles Morrow Wilson "should be pensioned and treated like royalty."[83]

With such praise, *Acres of Sky*, easily and successfully completed its schedule of ten performances at the university. The final show was presented Sunday afternoon, November 26, 1950.[84]

In the afterglow of the reception given *Acres of Sky*, with the Distinguished Alumni award from the University of Arkansas evidence of his acclaim as an author and the "gift" of his family pasture greatly

Charles Morrow Wilson, Jr. and James S. Wilson, ca. 1944

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F6, Photo 17,
Special Collections Department,
University of Arkansas Libraries

expanding Fayetteville's city park, it is no wonder Wilson believed the time was right to come back home.

The next spring, 1951, Wilson published his somewhat qualified encomium of Fayetteville in the journal *Tomorrow*. Yet, the article also included occasionally enthusiastic descriptions of the reasons for his return: "We," Wilson wrote, "my wife and I and our three young sons–are going home to work and live."[85]

While conceding that life growing up in Fayetteville wasn't always perfect – "I learned not to expect to be spoken to by the self-indicated 'better people'" Wilson wrote[86] – he concluded his article with a highly optimistic tone. "We feel and believe," he said, "that our home town stands for springtime, robust, sensitive, self-perpetuating, with bird songs, south winds, brave new leaves and invincible hope."[87]

Given his status and all that had happened of late, Wilson was certain he would be well received upon returning to Fayetteville. He even quoted Mrs. Fulbright as saying he would be "welcomed with open arms."[88]

In June 1951, while still retaining his farm in Vermont, Wilson purchased a farm off Highway 45, east of Fayetteville. He and his wife settled in with the reasonable hope of making the farm a success, raising their three sons in a positive environment, and reentering local society. It didn't take long for reality to alter that hope.

Back in Vermont and especially when he was in New York City, Wilson had become accustomed to having something of a social life. The previously mentioned dinners with Theodore Dreiser, get togethers with his friends Arthur Kreutz and Zoe Schiller, as well as other engagements enriched his and his family's eastern experience. In this regard, Fayetteville severely disappointed.

"We asked people whom we hoped were our friends out to our place," Wilson wrote, and "gave party after party which were never reciprocated." Those friends, he bemoaned, "did not phone and did not call."[89] As will be shown, part of the reason for the lack of a social life in Fayetteville may have been Charles Morrow's penchant for feuding, both with foe and friend alike.

In June 1950, a year before purchasing the farm outside Fayetteville and while he was preparing for the staging of *Acres of Sky*, Wilson became convinced that he had been offered a teaching job in the English Department at the University of Arkansas.

Feeling that he could "be of tremendous service to Arkansas," Wilson wrote that he had told Howard Carter, Chairman of the English

Charles Morrow Wilson, ca. 1960.

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F2, Photo 13,
Special Collections Department,
University of Arkansas Libraries

Department, he would "make every effort to join the university faculty starting in the fall of 1951."[90] The only problem was that no one from the University of Arkansas had officially offered him this faculty position. What ensued was a vitriolic three-year conflict with the university.

In letters to Herbert L. Thomas, a member of the University of Arkansas Board of Regents, Wilson insisted that back in 1950 he had been asked to join the faculty by none other than Chairman Carter. When this position was not forthcoming during his relocation to Fayetteville,

Wilson later wrote that a contract between himself and the university had been "wilfully (sic) violated" – although he admitted the position was just "part-time." The contract, he said, had been "lied and skunked out of" by no less a personage than former University of Arkansas President Lewis Webster Jones.[91]

Jones' replacement as president of the university, John Tyler Caldwell was besieged by angry missals from Wilson as well, which rehashed the writer's claim on the faculty job. Wilson informed Caldwell that the "welched" out of agreement had done "very serious injury ... to my family, my professional integrity, my financial facilities, and my ... works in behalf of the University of Arkansas."[92]

After several more exchanges of a similar nature, Dr. Caldwell had had enough of the topic and told Wilson that you "will properly drop the whole matter."[93] When Wilson continued to write him about the presumed faculty job offer, Caldwell finally excused himself from the argument by simply saying "I bow out."[94]

While the flap over the University of Arkansas teaching job was going on, other incidents occurred that supported Wilson's feeling that he and his family were not only being left out of local society but were openly being ostracized, even outright attacked. Wilson felt obliged to defend himself on two separate fronts.

For one, some people in town had from the beginning accused Wilson of making a profit on the Wilson Pasture deal with the city.[95] He was also accused of using this sale as an income tax dodge.[96] Naturally, Wilson strongly defended himself in letters to prominent Fayetteville citizens.

He maintained flatly, for example, that his reduction of $7000 from the selling price of Wilson Pasture was "the largest donation ever made in Fayetteville civic history."[97] He did acknowledge that Dr. Noah Drake, who gave $3,500 in 1929 for the creation of the Fayetteville Airport that would later bear his name, had also made a large gift to the city.[98]

Wilson was also quick to point out that he could have sold Wilson Pasture for "approximately $22,000 more than the amount paid by the City" for the land. He also labeled the income tax evasion accusation as "absolutely false and eminently libelous."[99]

During this time, Wilson had a falling out with influential Professor Walter Lemke, head of the University of Arkansas Department of Journalism,[100] who had been an early friend and booster of Wilson in the young man's formative stage as an author. Wilson now claimed that "for years" Lemke had been the perpetrator of "the completely untruthful and

completely vicious gossip" that most of his books and articles had been "subsidized or ... bribed by ...Interests,"[101] meaning his employers like United Fruit and Firestone.

Addressing a letter to his old friend as "Herr Lemke," Wilson directly accused the professor of lying and, after saying that he, Wilson, held "in hand" bona fide contracts for all twenty-three of his books, demanded that Lemke "issue in writing an apology and explanation of your conduct as performed behind the figurative breastworks of the University of Arkansas."[102]

Worse than his own treatment, Wilson also accused Lemke of having the "unpardonable insolence" to insult Mrs. Wilson "in an University office" when she had tried "in good faith and kindness to intervene and seek to re-establish pleasant relations" between the feuding men.[103]

As for his boys, Wilson later wrote that they had been "cruelly snobbed, insulted and snotted on."[104] The youngsters had been "grievously hurt" when they instead should have had every "right to grow up in my homeland without being so victimized."[105]

With things deteriorating rapidly in Fayetteville (his attempt at farming had even failed, primarily due to an extended drought that hit the region during the early 1950s), Wilson was already considering moving back to Vermont by December 1952.[106] The following March he wrote: "1953 is my final year in home pastures"[107] and on July 21, 1953 he was back in Putney temporarily although he made it clear that it was where "I shall presently return to live."[108]

Even though it hadn't taken him long to decide coming home was a mistake that he had to correct, Wilson didn't let that stand in the way of his writing productivity while he was living in Fayetteville. He was out of town frequently, mostly going back to New York City or traveling down to New Orleans to interview Samuel Zemurray, the former president of United Fruit, about whom Wilson was writing a biography.

Early in 1952, his play *Acres of Sky* was again performed. This time it was produced in New York City at the Brander Mathews Theatre as part of the American Music Festival at Columbia University.[109] Wilson had always harbored hopes his play would make it on Broadway and after the Columbia performances, there was also some talk of *Acres* being produced in Paris.[110] Neither scenario came to pass; however, and eventually interest in the play died out.

Wilson did get two books published during his short stay in Fayetteville. *The Tropics: World of Tomorrow*, one of his more forgettable

efforts, was published by Harper in 1951. His juvenile (young reader) book *Butterscotch and the Happy Barnyard* came out from Caxton in 1953, although it appears to have been a "subsidy" published work.[111] He also continued magazine work, placing articles in such diverse journals as *Science Digest*, *Nature Magazine*, *Think* and *Progressive Farmer*.

Busy and successful as a writer or not, by mid-summer 1954, Wilson had had enough of his old hometown and he and his family returned to their farm in Putney, Vermont. Early in January 1955, Wilson sold his Fayetteville farm to a Colonel Lewis and the prodigal son permanently removed himself from his ancestral home.

In a letter, Charles Morrow Wilson once described himself as "a notorious sourpuss and conservative."[112] Based on the tone of much of his personal correspondence through the years, that is putting it mildly. In fact, as shown earlier, he could be plainly vitriolic and vengeful – excessively so, even when he had a legitimate gripe. Frequently, his was a "caustic and demanding personality."[113]

Wilson also tended to hold on to grudges, slights, and disagreements for a very long time. Thus, he was still rehashing the contentious sale and renaming of Wilson Park, the phantom University of Arkansas faculty position, and the treatment of his family upon their return to Fayetteville many years after these events were long past.

Nowhere in his correspondence is Wilson so fierce in his condemnation of Fayetteville than in a late December, 1954 letter to former *Northwest Arkansas Times* editor, Lessie Stringfellow Read. In this letter, Wilson condenses all the anger he felt towards his hometown and its less than welcoming response to his return.

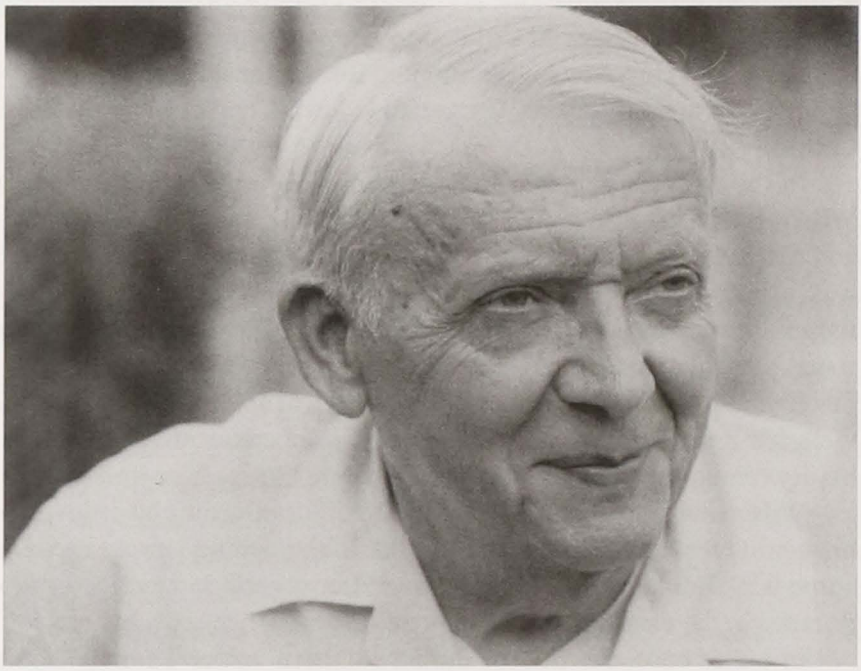
"At fifty," he wrote, "I am trying to start again in authorship and recover from the nastiness and viciousness of Fayetteville, Arkansas." Despite Mrs. Fulbright's belief that he and his family would be "welcomed with open arms," they were "not welcomed at all." The Wilsons endured "the snobbing and nastiness and stenches for three years" and they "lost terribly by trying to come home," where they were "thoroughly and despicably betrayed." Fayetteville, he concluded, would be better off if it changed its name to "Nastyville."[114]

In Wilson's defense concerning these feuds, it needs to be said that he suffered from considerable health issues, lung problems and diabetes in particular, which no doubt contributed to his "cranky" personality. His wife Martha also had health problems from time to time and this added stress to the already stressful world of the free-lance writer. Oftentimes

he did have legitimate points of conflict with colleagues and others in his feuds – such as the use of Wilson Pasture for student trailer housing. Moreover, as a man, he seems to have been a truly caring husband and a very protective father.

More to the point, personal conflicts and arguments aside, Charles Morrow Wilson was a highly successful, nationally and internationally respected author. And although his work never quite made the big leap to Broadway, Paris or Hollywood, as he hoped it would, many of his books are quite good and still well worth the trouble to find and read today.

In addition to the aforementioned *Ambassadors in White*, which presents biographies of several famous medical men devoted to tropical medicine, Wilson's history of the banana industry in *Empires in Green and Gold* is particularly interesting and well done. This book showcases



Charles Morrow Wilson, ca. 1975.

Courtesy:
Charles Morrow Wilson Papers,
MS W692 311, B1, F2, Photo 23,
Special Collections Department,
University of Arkansas Libraries

Wilson's ability to blend information from multiple sources into a very readable, cohesive whole.

For local color, there are *The Bodacious Ozarks: True Tales of the Backwoods* and *Stars Is God's Lanterns*. Both books provide a wealth of Arkansas back country stories. Wilson also wrote biographies, notably *Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark*, *Rudolph Diesel: Pioneer of the Age of Power*, and *The Commoner: William Jennings Bryan*.

Beginning with *Ginger Blue* in 1940, he published several juvenile books as well. Other titles in this genre were: *The Great Turkey Drive*, *Dow Baker and the Great Banana Fleet*, and the previously noted *Butterscotch and the Happy Barnyard*.

In addition to the large number of books, stories and articles he wrote, Wilson's work, including large amounts of his correspondence and other professional and private material, has been collected in three library holdings in various locations around the country. The most extensive collection is in the Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas. The University of Vermont in Burlington and the University of Oregon Library in Eugene, Oregon also have Charles Morrow Wilson Collections.

In the end, all personal feuds and enmity aside, Charles Morrow Wilson was a prolific author of great skill, able to rapidly marshal vast and disparate sources of information into coherent, readable prose. He was a tireless worker and like many successful writers always looking for a follow-up project, always moving on to the next assignment. When it was all said and done he left behind an enormous writing legacy.

Even though much of his work was topical and hasn't perhaps aged well, it's unfortunate that an author of his once considerable stature is hardly remembered today in the town where he was born and raised.

Wilson may have grown up in Fayetteville and he may have developed his genius for writing here as well, but in the end he simply could not come back home to live. Perhaps he had changed too much after those decades in the east and maybe Fayetteville had changed a lot, too.

In either case, the title of famed southern writer Thomas Wolfe's groundbreaking 1940 novel *You Can't Go Home Again* provides an appropriately pithy aphorism for the case of Charles Morrow Wilson and his failed return to Fayetteville. Wilson, like many another small town success, found that after too many miles and too many years away, you really can't go home again.

On Tuesday, March 1, 1977, Charles Morrow Wilson died in Putney, Vermont at age 71. The child prodigy, the youthful genius, the man of conflict and ambition was gone – gone a long way from home.

End Notes

[1]Wilson, Charles Morrow (CMW), "Hometown Revisited," *Tomorrow*, May 1951, p. 21.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]*Ibid*, p. 18.

[4]*Ibid*, p. 20.

[5]CMW to Lessie (Stringfellow Read), December 28, 1954. Charles Morrow Wilson Papers, Location C1271, Box 7, Folder 10. Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

[6]CMW, "Farmers Will Stop Communism," *The Progressive Farmer*, May 1951, reprint (unpaginated folio). C1346 OV Box 1.

[7]"Hometown Revisited," p. 18.

[8]*Ibid*, p. 19.

[9]CMW, "More Lights," in *Stars Is God 's Lanterns*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1969, p. 176.

[10]*Northwest Arkansas Times* (*NWAT*), May 10, 1948.

[11]*NWAT*, September 10, 1993.

[12]CMW, detailed resume, undated (ca. 1975). Charles Morrow Wilson Papers, Location C1318, Box 37, Folder 1. Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

[13]Campbell, William S., *One Hundred Years of Fayetteville, 1828-1928*, Fayetteville, AR: n.p, 1928, p. 92.

[14]Hogan, J. B., "Fayetteville City Officials," *Flashback*, Summer 2007, Vol. 57, No. 3, 70.

[15]Campbell, p. 98.

[16]Hogan, pp. 68-69, 71.

[17]*NWAT*, December 17, 1942.

[18]*Razorback*, annual yearbook of the University of Arkansas, 1924, pp. 88, 117.

[19]*Ibid*, 1925, pp. 123 and 125.

[20]Campbell, p. 108.

[21]*All's Well*, Vol. 6, No. 8, December 1926, p. 17.

[22]*Ibid*, Vol. VI, No. XII, April-May 1927, pp. 18-19.

[23]*Ibid*, Vol. VII, No. I, June 1927, pp. 14-15.

[24]*Ibid*, Vol. VII, No. VII, March 1928, pp. 7-10.

[25]*Ibid*, Vol. VII, No. III, September-October 1927, p. 3.

[26]*Fayetteville Daily Democrat* (*FDD*), April 3, 1928.

[27]*FDD*, October 16, 1928.

[28]*All's Well*, Vol. 7, No. 10, August-September 1928, p. 10.

[29]CMW, detailed resume, April 27, 1961. The newspapers were the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *New York World*. C1318, Box 37, Folder 1.

[30]*FDD*, September 16, 1927. This bout is famous for the referee's "long count" given to Tunney who went on to defeat Dempsey again and bring to an end the ex-champion's former dominance as a heavyweight fighter.

[31]*Atlantic Monthly* to CMW (Payment Form), October 19, 1928. C1274, Box 10, Folder 1.

[32]*FDD*, April 4, 1929.

[33]CMW to Mattie Morrow Wilson, May 24, 1929. C1265, Box 1, Folder 2.

[34]*Ibid*.

[35]Ben Hibbs (Editor, *Country Gentleman*) to CMW, June 14, 1937. C1274, Box 10, Folder 5.

[36]CMW to Joseph Dickson Wilson, April 1, 1938. C1267, Box 3, Folder 14.

[37]Pearl S. Buck to CMW, September 10, 1934. C1274, Box 10, Folder 3.

[38]CMW to Mattie Morrow Wilson, November 23, 1933. C1265, Box 1, Folder 7.

[39]CMW to Mattie Morrow Wilson, February 17, 1937. C1267, Box 3, Folder 13.

[40]Fred Starr wrote the Ozarks column "Hillside Adventures" for many years in the *Northwest Arkansas Times*. He was the author of nine books, perhaps the best known of which is *Of These Hills and Us* published in 1958. Fred Starr died in 1973 aged 77.

[41]CMW, detailed resume, April 27, 1961. C1318, Box 37, Folder 1.

[42]"A Charter for Middle America," Middle America Information Bureau, United Fruit Company, 1941, p. 2.

[43]*Ibid*, p. 3.

[44]*Ibid*,p. 2. A somewhat ironic position, given the well-documented involvement of United Fruit in the overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954.

[45]CMW to Joseph Dickson Wilson, June 15, 1937. C1267, Box 3, Folder 13.

[46]CMW, detailed resume, April 27, 1961. C1318, Box 37, Folder 1. According to other biographical materials, Wilson indicates he served in the Navy procurement "of strategic supplies" (C1318, Box 37, Folder 2).

[47]CMW to Mrs. Roberta Fulbright, October 11, 1944. C1270, Box 6, Folder 4.

[48]CMW to Mrs. Roberta Fulbright, October 31, 1944. C1270, Box 6, Folder 4.

[49]Dr. Drake and the City Park Company had purchased the original city park grounds from A. L. Trent in 1926.

[50]*Ibid.*

[51]CMW to Kate Wilson Ripley., January 2, 1945. C1268, Box 4, Folder 20.

[52]CMW to Suzanne "Peg" Chalfant Lighton, January 2, 1945. C1270, Box 6, Folder 4.

[53]Mrs. Roberta Fulbright to CMW, February 26, 1945. C1270, Box 6, Folder 4.

[54]CMW to George T. Sanders., March 29, 1945. C1270, Box 6, Folder 4.

[55]*NWAT*, August 16, 1946.

[56]*Ibid.*

[57]*Ibid*, August 20, 1945.

[58]CMW to Kate Wilson Ripley, December 14, 1945. C1268, Box 4, Folder 20.

[59]Warranty Deed, Book 370, Page 207, Washington County Records, Fayetteville, Arkansas, August 26, 1946.

[60]*NWAT*, January 5, 1949.

[61]*Ibid*, January 6, 1949.

[62]Powell M. Rhea to CMW, November 3, 1950. C1270, Box 6, Folder 7.

[63]*Ibid.*

[64]CMW, "Backwards a Dozen Centuries," *Natural History*, 56:370-378, October 1947.

[65]Branch, Mark Alden, "Secrets of the Temple," *Yale Alumni Magazine*, internet document, URL http://www.yalealumnimagazine.com/issues/02_11/maya.html, November 2002.

[66]CMW, detailed resume, April 27, 1961. C1318, Box 37, Folder 1.

[67]CMW, "Backwards a Dozen Centuries," *Natural History*, 56:370-78, October 1947.

[68]CMW, "Bonampak," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 27, 1947.

[69]CMW, "Nature's Own Children," *Nature Magazine*, February 1951, pp. 65-70.

[70]CMW to Kenneth MacGowan, August 5, 1947. C1275, Box 11, Folder 13.

[71]CMW to Kenneth MacGowan, September 4, 1947. C1275, Box 11, Folder 13.

[72]Kenneth MacGowan to CMW, September 8, 1947. C1275, Box 11, Folder 13.

[73]CMW to Kenneth MacGowan, October 31, 1947. C1275, Box 11, Folder 13.

[74]"Biography for Kenneth MacGowan," undated internet document, Internet Movie Database, URL http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0532284/bio.

[75]Compton, Ellen, "Charles Morrow Wilson," entry in *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, April 21, 2007.

[76]CMW, detailed resume, April 27, 1961. C1318, Box 37, Folder 1.

[77]*NWAT*, May 17, 1947.

[78]Edward Durell Stone was the grandson of Stephen K. Stone. In his autobiography *Evolution of an Architect* (Horizon Press, New York, 1962), Edward Durell described his grandfather as "one of the earliest settlers of northwest Arkansas and one of the founders of Fayetteville" (p. 16). In addition to buildings throughout the world, Edward Durell Stone designed the Windham College campus in Putney, Vermont, Charles Morrow Wilson's long-time hometown.

[79]*Ibid*, September 12, 1950.

[80]CMW, personal correspondence, undated (ca. 1951). C1316, Box 35, Sub-series 242, Folder 1.

[81]Joe E. Covington to CMW, July 27, 1950. C1270, Box 6, Folder 7.

[82]*NWAT*, November 15, 1950.

[83]*Ibid*, November 27, 1950.

[84]*Ibid*, November 25, 1950.

[85]"Hometown Revisited," p. 16.

[86]*Ibid*, p. 18.

[87]*Ibid*, p. 21.

[88]CMW to Kate Wilson Ripley, December 28, 1954. C1271, Box 7, Folder 10.

[89]*Ibid.*

[90]CMW to Dudley Dowell, June 16, 1950. C1270, Box 6, Folder 7.

[91]CMW to Herbert L. Thomas., July 6 and July 21, 1953. C1271, Box 7, Folder 9.

[92]CMW to John T. Caldwell, November 2, 1954. C1271, Box 7, Folder 10.

[93]John T. Caldwell to CMW, September 21, 1954.

[94]John T. Caldwell to CMW, November 1, 1954.

[95]CMW to J. K. Gregory, January 31, 1949. C1270, Box 6, Folder 6.

[96]CMW to W. C. Whitfield, June 30, 1950. C1270, Box 6, Folder 7.

[97]CMW to W. C. Whitfield, August 4, 1949. C1270, Box 6, Folder 6.

[98]CMW to George T. Sanders, December 23, 1948. C1270, Box 6, Folder 6.

[99]CMW to W. C. Whitfield, June 30, 1950. C1270, Box 6, Folder 7.

[100]Professor Lemke was then head of the University of Arkansas Journalism Department and was one of the original organizers ofthe Washington County Historical Society.

[101]CMW to Walter J. Lemke, July 21, 1953. C1271, Box 7, Folder 9.

[102]*Ibid.*

[103]CMW to John T. Caldwell, November 2, 1954. C1271, Box 7, Folder 10.

[104]CMW to Donald Trumbo, Jr., August 8, 1967. C1272, Box 8, Folder 16.

[105]CMW to Donald Trumbo, Jr., August 10, 1967. C1272, Box 8, Folder 16.

[106]CMW to Edward I. Salisbury, December 28, 1952. C1276, Box 12, Folder 19.

[107]CMW to Merle Thorpe, March 30, 1953. C1277, Box 13, Folder 20.

[108]CMW to Herbert L. Thomas, July 21, 1953. C1271, Box 7, Folder 9.

[109]CMW, personal correspondence, undated (ca. 1951). C1316, Box 35, Sub-series 242, Folder 1

[110]*NWAT*, February 16, 1952.

[111]Subsidy or Vanity Publishing requires the author to finance his or her own work for a percentage of the book's sales. Subsidy publishing is typically a writer's last resort for work not accepted by full-service publishing houses.

Announcements

Message From the Editor

Tim Nutt will turn over editorship of *Flashback* to Charlie Alison beginning with the Spring 2011 issue. Alison received a degree in Journalism from the University of Arkansas and is employed in University Relations there as manager of special projects. He currently serves on the Society's Board of Directors.

Nutt thanks all contributors to *Flashback*, as well as the officers and members of the Society, for their suggestions and support during his tenure as editor.

Distinguished Citizens Honored by Society

The Washington County Historical Society honored Velda Brotherton and Hugh R. Kincaid as recipients of its Distinguished Citizen Award for 2010. The awards were presented at the Society's annual meeting on October 17, 2010.

Velda Brotherton, a native of Arkansas, is an accomplished author. In introducing Ms. Brotherton, Dee Dee Lamb said "I believe she has a special spirit that she shares in words with others. She has a quiet dignity that shouts with strength and beauty. Her work helpus us increase our love and appreciation of these hills that we call home."

Hugh R. Kincaid is well-known in both legal and historical circles in Northwest Arkansas. Julian Stewart related Kincaid's many accomplishments, including his political career and his law firm's purchase and restoration of the Walker-Stone House (1847) in Fayetteville. He is a stalwart supporter of the Society and portrays Governor and Congressman Archibald Yell at many functions.

Please join the Society in recongnizing Velda Brotherton and Hugh Kincaid for their support of Washington County history.

Correction

An error was inadvertently published in the "Cabin Orgy Deaths—December 1936" article, which appeared in the fall 2010 issue of *Flashback*. Uncle John's Tourist Cabins actually stood near where the Walgreen's is now located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Township and North College, not where Herman's Steak House is, as was published. (End Note #1, p. 82)

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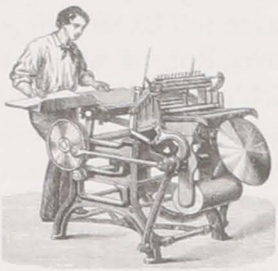
The Washington County Historical Society announces the 4th Annual W.J. Lemke Prize competition. Anyone interested in Washington County history, whether a professional or amateur historian, is encouraged to enter. Topics can be on any phase of Washington County's history or archeology, deal with an individual or institution connected with the county, and can address any time period.



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Manuscripts will be judged on their contribution to the expansion of the county's history; the originality of the subject; and, the use of primary and secondary sources. The manuscripts must be original material, and not have been previously published; no more than 40 pages, typed, and doubled-spaced. Footnotes should be included on separate, double-spaced pages, although they do not count toward the 40-page limit. The title page should contain the heading "W.J. LEMKE PRIZE," the full title of the manuscript, the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address.

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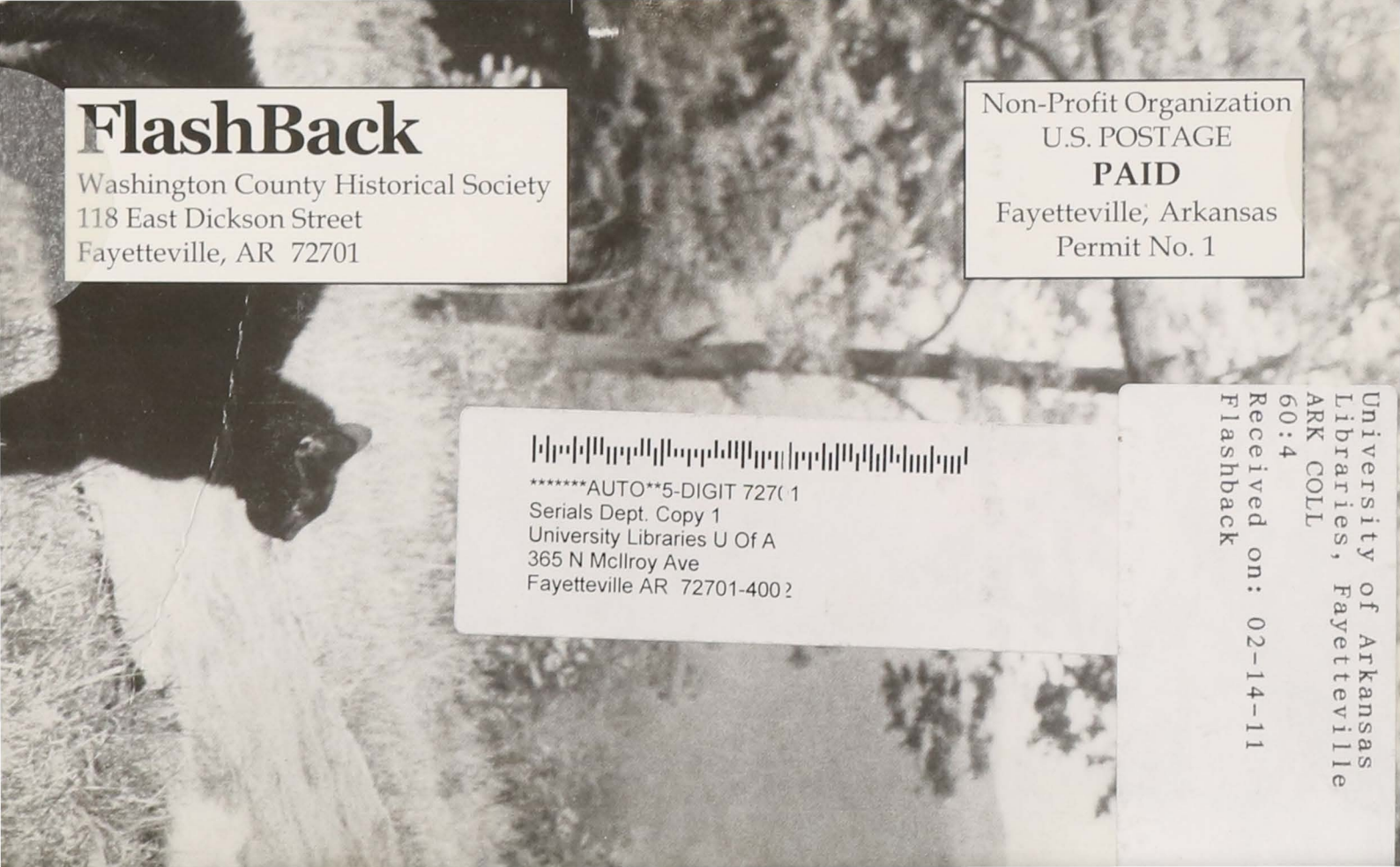

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